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CONSUMER TIME

CITRUS STORY

NETWORK: NBC

DATE: January 25, 1947

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(Produced by the United States Department of Agriculture. This script was prepared for broadcast and is for reference only. It may not be broadcast without special permission. The title CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast of the program...presented for more than thirteen years in the interest of consumers.)

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE....MONEY IN TILL
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER....CLOSE DRAWER
4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. And here are your inquiring consumers, Mrs. Freyman and Johnny.
5. MUSIC: (BACKGROUND)
6. FREYMAN: (DREAMILY) And then the train pulled out of Vera Cruz, and we were at last climbing up to Mexico City...through fields of coffee and bananas...leaving the sun-scarred coast for the high plateau of the interior.
7. JOHN: You mean you didn't go by burro, Mrs. Freyman.
8. FREYMAN: (IGNORING INTERRUPTION) And soon we stopped at a little place called FORTIN (FOURTEEN) to buy camelias and tortillas. Night was all over...and soft like a fluff of black, silky feathers. (PAUSE) Suddenly, I felt the stab of the most exquisite smell I've ever smelled.
9. JOHN: Too bad we only have sound effects in radio, Mrs. Freyman.

10. FREYMAN: (GETTING MORE EXCITED) Intoxicated with the fragrance, I stumbled out of the train and disappeared into the silky, fragrant night. When I woke up in the morning I was in an orange grove...and in the distance was the snowy peak of Mt. Orizaba spearing a cloud. (PAUSE) Oh Johnny, believe me, an orange grove is a place to live and die in.
11. JOHN: (TRAVELOGUE TONE) And so, as the sun rises, we say ADIOS to Beautiful Fortin where the blossoms of the satsuma and mandarin fill the air with apoloignant perfume that wraps itself around your heart.
12. MUSIC: (FADE)
13. FREYMAN: Whoa! Hold on Johnny. This trip is just beginning. All I'm doing is putting you in a citrus mood.
14. JOHN: Okay, Mrs. Freyman, I'm completely in mood.
15. FREYMAN: To begin in the beginning, Johnny, there's a lot of mystery that screens the origin of citrus. Come to think of it, the family is so ancient that their birth certificates are a little fuzzy. It seems likely, however, that the sour orange and the lemon were carried by the Arabs into Persia and Palestine. Later on, the Crusaders introduced these tangy fruits into Italy and Southern Europe. Still later, some travelling salesmen fetched them from Asia to Northern Africa and Spain.
16. JOHN: But what about the sweet orange that we so dearly love with our pop nut skrummies every morning?
17. FREYMAN: The sweet orange pulls a blank in literature. But we do know that it had become well established in Southern Europe by the beginning of the year 1500.
18. JOHN: And when did the citrus family migrate to America, Mrs. Freyman? I'll bet you two bits that man Columbus had something to do with it.

19. FREYMAN: (CARNIVAL TONE) Three oranges and a head by Raphael for the man in red suspenders! (PAUSE) Yup, it was that man Columbus. On his second voyage, he stopped off at one of the Canary Islands... during which time, with great haste he "bought hens and also grains...and seeds of oranges, lemons and citrons." When he reached Haiti, he set out orchards and planted gardens.
20. JOHN: And that, sayeth the historian, "was the origin of everything that is there today of the things of Castile." From Haiti, it was only a hop, skip and a crawl to the mainland. (PAUSE) Then it started....
21. MUSIC: (BACKGROUND)
22. FREYMAN: Citrus in Brazil in 1549....
23. JOHN: (BUILDING UP) Citrus in St. Augustine by 1579.
24. FREYMAN: Citrus in Peru before 1591....
25. JOHN: Citrus in southern California by 1769...courtesy of the Franciscan missions, the gold rush and Mrs. Tibbets.
26. MUSIC: (FADE)
27. FREYMAN: Mrs. Tibbets? How did she come on the citrus scene, Johnny?
28. JOHN: Well, you remember what Horace Greeley said about going West. Mrs. T. took his advice, taking with her two young navel orange trees, part of a shipment of twelve that had been sent in a tub from Bahia, Brazil to Washington, D. C. She headed straight for Riverside, California, where she planted her Washington navel orange trees. It didn't take long for their excellence to create a stir among California growers.
29. FREYMAN: What about grapefruit, Johnny. Are its ancestral papers legible?
30. JOHN: Grapefruit was the last of the citrus clan to fly the nest. Where the nest was is obscure. But we do know that this fruit came to us from the West Indies, and doesn't correspond to any Oriental type.

31. FREYMAN: You know, Johnny, I've heard that there was a time when only half a grapefruit could be served. The top was oval, and wobbled all over the place.
32. JOHN: And there was some talk of designing bell-shaped plates to accommodate these oval uppers. But the plant breeders hopped to the rescue and developed a type of grapefruit that had two flat surfaces.
33. FREYMAN: Do you think, Johnny, there might come a day when they'll take the squirt out too?
34. JOHN: Could be. They've developed seedless varieties. They've even changed the color of the flesh and rind to pink and ruby red.
35. SOUND: (PAUSE)
36. FREYMAN: But it hasn't been all hearts and flowers for the citrus industry, Johnny. There have been lots of bad days and bad nights. There was the time back in 1929 when the Mediterranean fruit fly came in under the quarantine rope and threatened the entire citrus crop in the United States.
37. JOHN: But don't think the growers or the state and federal officials let that thing buzz around. Right away, quick, immediate and aggressive action was taken. Groves were inspected, a drastic quarantine slapped down on any host fruits, the infested fruit ground, dumped into steam vats and disposed of. And all the orchards sprayed.
38. FREYMAN: By the end of 1929, the Mediterranean fruit fly was practically cleaned out.
39. JOHN: And don't forget citrus canker, Mrs. Freyman. Nobody knew what it was at first. Then they discovered it was a bacterial disease. Came all the way from Japan on some rootstock.
40. FREYMAN: What were we doing with rootstock from Japan, Johnny?

41. JOHN: Now that's an interesting question, Mrs. F. And don't think I wasn't hoping you'd ask it.
42. FREYMAN: (LAUGHING) Come on, Johnny. Stop buffing your nails on your lapel...and give with that spontaneous answer you've been boning up on.
43. JOHN: It goes something like this, Mrs. Freyman. You don't grow citrus from seed. You plant some rootstock that's resistant to cold and disease...then graft a bud on your rootstock. That gives you the kind of tree you want. Now around 1910, there developed a citrus variety called satsuma. It was a fine fruit, it had good markets, it flourished nicely in a cool climate. BUT, it needed a hearty rootstock. So we sent off to Japan and received same for our satsumas.
44. FREYMAN: I'm still with you, Johnny.
45. MUSIC: (BACKGROUND)
46. JOHN: Then the blow fell. Citrus canker was with us. There was no known cure...so we treated it the way we do the foot and mouth disease.
47. FREYMAN: You mean the growers just destroyed all the trees that were exposed to canker?
48. JOHN: Exactly, Mrs. Freyman. The infection zoomed around like wildfire. So they fought fire with fire. All the trees were destroyed by flame throwers. It was a real scorched earth policy. Not only were infected trees destroyed, but adjoining trees that seemed okay were also burned to the ground. In the end, citrus canker was wiped out in all the commercial areas.
49. MUSIC: (OUT)

50. FREYMAN: But enough of pestilence and destruction. (PAUSE) Something you said a little while back caught my fancy, Johnny. Something you said about citrus not growing from seed. You mean you can't plant a Valencia seed and watch it grow into a Valencia tree just like the one the seed came from?
51. JOHN: That bothered me too, Mrs. Freyman, so I turned to the Department of Agriculture, and I found me an expert. Her name is Juliet Carrington. But before I introduce Mrs. Carrington, I'd like to tell you a little about her. She spent half of her college life at Vassar, majoring in French and West Point...and the second half at the University of Florida, majoring in Entomology and citrus culture. A man's college, too!
52. FREYMAN: And now she's a marketing specialist at the Department, a job that very few women hold.
53. JOHN: What we'd like you to do, Mrs. Carrington is to spell out how breeders get the kind of fruit they want.
54. CARRINGTON: The thing to remember about citrus trees is that they do not reproduce true to type through seeds. If you plant a seed, you'll get a tree, all right, but the fruit may be a surprise. And since the industry is not built on surprises, breeders and growers are constantly on the alert to produce the kind of fruit the consumer wants to buy.
55. JOHN: Let's make out, Mrs. Carrington, that I'm a big citrus grower. Let's make out I want some real fine fruit in my orchard. How do I go about it? What do I do first?

56. CARRINGTON: First you get yourself some rootstock. The most desirable citrus fruits are raised on sour orange stock. You take the sour orange seed and plant it. After a year, you have a seedling about as big as your finger. Then you select a tree that produces high quality fruit and is free from bark disease. You choose your budwood from it...taking care that it's mature... and cut off a bud. It is this bud that gets grafted onto the sour orange seedling.
57. JOHN: Then what, Mrs. Carrington? You know...this is better than a who-done-it. Then what happens?
58. CARRINGTON: The bud is exposed to sun and air, and you keep your fingers and toes crossed in the hope that the bud will take. After about two weeks of holding your breath, you trot around to the grove to see if it did take. Believe me, that's a big moment. After the sprout grows up to about a foot, you prune off the top of your seedling. What you have left is your budded tree, which is the citrus tree that will produce the kind of fruit you want.
59. FREYMAN: And all the time I thought you just dug a little hole in the ground, popped a little citrus seed in, and your favorite fruit came up. All I've got to say is that science is a wonderful thing department.
60. CARRINGTON: But since I'm a marketing specialist rather than a scientist, why don't you throw some market questions at me?
61. FREYMAN: It just occurred to me, Mrs. Carrington, that citrus fruits are available to the American consumer the year round. How come?
62. CARRINGTON: That's because citrus gives a continuous performance, Mrs. Freyman. In California, the Washington Navel and Valencia supply fruit maturing from November to November. In Florida, there are three or four sweet orange varieties, including Valencias, that are ready for market from October to July.

63. JOHN: And how does it go with lemons and grapefruit?
64. CARRINGTON: In California, lemons are more or less everbearing. Grapefruit matures during the fall and winter months in both Florida and Texas and goes to market until summer. California and Arizona come in somewhat later.
65. JOHN: And when the citrus sisters aren't playing their sister act at the fresh fruit stands, you can always find them doing the can-can. No time out for citrus. The show must go on!
And does go on. For the people must have their vitamin C!
66. CARRINGTON: According to Agriculture estimates, the current show is the best on record. Oranges and grapefruit have broken every production figure so far.. And there's nothing sluggish about the cascade of citrus juices that's tumbling into cans.
67. FREYMAN: This continuous performance that you've talked about, Mrs. Carrington, is something that the nutritionists appreciate. Especially in the winter time when there aren't so many other sources of vitamin C.
68. JOHN: Good old vitamin C...wouldn't be ^{caught} without it.
69. FREYMAN: And if anything can boast of its C content, it sure is the citrus gals! And Johnny...C is not for cheesecake.
70. JOHN: C is for C, Mrs. Freyman. Spelled backwards, we have C, or ascorbic acid. And if you get enough of it, your body tissues are healthier...especially bones, teeth and gums. And I've heard something else, Mrs. Freyman. (CONFIDENTIAL) (LOW) They're trying to prove that a slug of citrus is as good as a long drink out of the fountain of youth.
71. FREYMAN: (LAUGHING) I can see that it will be definitely worth my while to increase my citrus quota !

72. JOHN: But you've got to treat vitamin C carefully, Mrs. Freyman. It's temperamental...and easily decomposed.
73. FREYMAN: It's allergic to all kinds of things, Johnny...air, enzyme fright, metals...leprechauns...^{and}elves that say "hoo" in the night....
74. JOHN: But nutritionists have discovered that C is not quite as neurotic as we used to think.
75. FREYMAN: You can even squeeze your breakfast juice the night before.
76. JOHN: Just so you remember to keep it cool and tightly covered.
77. SOUND: (PAUSE)
78. FREYMAN: Before it slips my mind, there's something else I want to ask Mrs. Carrington. About color. Lots of times the consumer sees beautiful golden oranges that are stamped "color added." Does this mean that the fruit is not ripe, and needs a camouflage job?
79. CARRINGTON: That little label can only be stamped on fully ripe fruit. As a matter of fact, all citrus must be ripe before it is picked. Citrus-growing states have maturity laws...and these laws are observed by all shippers.
80. FREYMAN: What about oranges that have patches of green at the stem end? Are they ripe, Mrs. Carrington?
81. CARRINGTON: Sometimes the fruit looks green but is quite mature. But since many homemakers will toss these green oranges aside, the shippers place them in a room filled with ethylene gas. What happens is that the gas brings out the color that already exists in the ripe fruit. If a deeper shade of orange is desired, they shoot the fruit into a bath of harmless dye. In addition to gas, oranges also get a borax bath and the wax and polish treatment. Not for beauty, but to slow up shrinkage and prevent decay.

82. FREYMAN: We don't usually exploit our guest this much, Mrs. Carrington. But you're the expert, and Johnny and I are really being inquiring consumers today. How about some buying hints on citrus.
83. CARRINGTON: The main thing to remember when buying citrus is that the heavier fruits are juicier than the feather weights. That's why you ought to weigh the fruit in your hand before you make a selection. And don't let looks deceive you. Sometimes a pocked and mottled skin conceals a very choice fruit.
84. FREYMAN: Mrs. Carrington, Johnny and I are so glad you could be with us today. Next time we want information on citrus, we'll know exactly where to go.
85. MUSIC: (BACKGROUND)
86. JOHN: And, Mrs. Freyman, thank you too. I'm glad you didn't decide to stay in ~~that~~ Mexican orange grove. (PAUSE) Ahem, can I say it now?
87. MRS. FREYMAN: Ahem, say what, Johnny?
88. JOHN: And, as the sun sets in the golden west on the Isle of Whatsis, we say farewell to the land of the mandarin, and all its sisters and its brothers, and its cousins and....
89. FREYMAN: (APOGETICALLY) Do you think, Johnny, you could come back for a moment and tell about next week's program?
90. JOHN: Next week's CONSUMER TIME will be on the subject of BREAD AND MEAT...another CONSUMER SPEAKS project.
91. FREYMAN: Kind of basic, wouldn't you say, Johnny?
92. JOHN: (LAUGHING) If you mean there aren't any black feathers and snow-capped peaks in this one...I'll agree.
93. MUSIC: (OUT)

94. FREYMAN: So friends, be sure to be with us next Saturday at the same time
for another edition of

95. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

96. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!

97. SOUND: CASH REGISTER....CLOSE DRAWER

98. ANNCR: TODAY'S CONSUMER TIME script was written by Sophia Podolsky and
directed by Frederick Schweikher, is presented by the U. S.
Department of Agriculture, through the facilities of the National
Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations.
It comes to you from Washington, D. C.

This is NBC, the National Broadcasting Company

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